

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1.     In a first server, a method for conducting a shareholders meeting with  
2 remote participation comprising:  
3           notifying a plurality of shareholders of a shareholders meeting;  
4           receiving notification from at least some of said shareholders indicating that  
5 they will attend said shareholders meeting as remotely attending shareholders, each remotely  
6 attending shareholder having an associated second server, said second servers providing  
7 shareholders meeting services to said remotely attending shareholders;  
8           transmitting meeting proceedings to said second servers for subsequent  
9 transmission to said remotely attending shareholders; and  
10          producing a final tabulation of votes indicating the voting preferences of all of  
11 said shareholders on issues brought up during said shareholders meeting,  
12          said producing including for each of said second servers:  
13           receiving a voting form from each of its associated remotely attending  
14 shareholders;  
15           tabulating said voting form to produce a tabulated votes result; and  
16           transmitting said tabulated votes result to said first server,  
17          said final tabulation of votes including tabulated votes results from all of said  
18 second servers.

1           2.     The method of claim 1 wherein at each of said second servers if one of  
2 its associated remotely attending shareholders had cast an earlier voting form, then ignoring  
3 said earlier voting form in favor of a most recent voting form.

1           3.     The method of claim 1 further including receiving for a period of time  
2 a plurality of requests to ask a question, selecting one of said requests to ask a question  
3 during said period of time, providing an answer to said question, and ignoring those of said  
4 requests to ask a question which have not been selected, said plurality of requests to ask a  
5 question including requests from said second servers which have been submitted by said  
6 remotely attending shareholders.

1           4.     The method of claim 1 further including transmitting participant  
2 information to each of said remotely attending shareholders, said participant information  
3 including an encrypted portion and an unencrypted portion, wherein said participant

information is transmitted by said remotely participating shareholders to said second servers, said second servers decrypting said encrypted portion to produce a decrypted output and comparing said decrypted output with said unencrypted portion to verify said remotely attending shareholders for participation in said shareholders meeting.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said unencrypted portion comprises shareholder information and said encrypted portion includes said shareholder information in encrypted form.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein said encrypted portion includes a descrambling key, said meeting proceedings being in encrypted form, the method further including transmitting said descrambling key from said second servers to said remotely participating shareholders who use it to decrypt said meeting proceedings.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of notifying includes transmitting to a third server an information signal indicative of said shareholders meeting, and in response to said information signal producing at said third server a shareholders meeting notification and transmitting it to said shareholders.

8. The method of claim 1 further including providing for discussion only among said shareholders, including receiving at one of said second servers audio-visual information from one of its associated remotely attending shareholders and transmitting said audio-visual information only to all of said shareholders.

9. A method for conducting a shareholders meeting comprising:  
notifying shareholders of a shareholders meeting, said shareholders meeting taking place at a first location;  
identifying a plurality of remote shareholders who will attend said shareholders meeting remotely, each remote shareholder having an associated satellite server site which provides shareholders meeting services, said satellite server sites in communication via a data communication network with a shareholders meeting server system located at said first location;  
producing first audio-visual information at said first location; and  
transmitting said first audio-visual information to each of said satellite server sites so that said remote shareholders can view proceedings of said shareholders meeting, each of said satellite server sites:

receiving voting forms from its associated remote shareholders, including deleting an earlier received voting form of a remote shareholder who submits a subsequent voting form; tabulating said voting forms to produce a tabulated result; and sending said tabulated result to said shareholders meeting server system, said shareholders meeting server system, tabulating votes of said shareholders including tabulating tabulated results received from said satellite server sites.

10. The method of claim 9 further including receiving for a period of time a plurality of requests to ask a question, selecting one of said requests to ask a question during said period of time, providing an answer to said question, and ignoring those of said requests to ask a question which have not been selected, said plurality of requests to ask a question including requests from said satellite server sites which have been submitted by said remote shareholders.

11. The method of claim 9 further including transmitting participant information to said remote shareholders, said participant information comprising encrypted shareholder information and unencrypted shareholder information, wherein said remote shareholders transmit said participant information to their associated satellite server sites, and in response to receiving said participant information said satellite server sites decrypting said encrypted shareholder information to produce an output and comparing said output against said unencrypted shareholder information to verify said remote shareholders for participation in said shareholders meeting.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said participant information further includes an encrypted descrambling key, said first-audio visual information being in encrypted form, the method further including transmitting said descrambling key from said satellite servers sites to said remote shareholders who use it to decrypt said first-audio visual information.

13. The method of claim 9 further including receiving at one of said satellite server sites second audio-visual information from one of its assigned remote shareholders and transmitting said second audio-visual information to said shareholders meeting server system, said shareholders meeting server system transmitting said second

5 audio-visual information to all of said satellite server sites so that said remote shareholders  
6 can actively participate in said shareholders meeting.

1 14. The method of claim 9 further providing for discussion only among  
2 said shareholders, including receiving at one of said satellite server sites second audio-visual  
3 information from one of its assigned remote shareholders and transmitting said second audio-  
4 visual information only to all of said shareholders.

1 15. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of notifying shareholders  
2 includes transmitting a signal to an agent server and in response to said signal, said agent  
3 server preparing a shareholders meeting notice and sending it to said shareholders.

1 16. A method for conducting a shareholders meeting comprising:  
2 notifying shareholders of a shareholders meeting, said shareholders meeting  
3 taking place at a first location;  
4 identifying a plurality of remote shareholders who will attend said  
5 shareholders meeting remotely, each remote shareholder having an associated satellite server  
6 site which provides shareholders meeting services, said satellite server sites in  
7 communication via a data communication network with a shareholders meeting server system  
8 located at said first location;  
9 producing first audio-visual information at said first location;  
10 transmitting said first audio-visual information to each of said satellite server  
11 sites so that said remote shareholders can view proceedings of said shareholders meeting;  
12 receiving for a period of time a plurality of requests to ask a question,  
13 including requests from said satellite server sites which have been submitted by said remote  
14 shareholders;  
15 selecting one of said requests to ask a question during said period of time; and  
16 providing an answer to said question, wherein those of said requests to ask a  
17 question which have not been selected are ignored.

1 17. The method of claim 16 further including at each of said satellite  
2 server sites:  
3 receiving voting forms from its associated remote shareholders;  
4 tabulating said voting forms to produce a tabulated result; and  
5 sending said tabulated result to said shareholders meeting server system,

6 said shareholders meeting server system, tabulating votes of said shareholders  
7 including tabulating tabulated results received from said satellite server sites to produce a  
8 final tabulation of votes on issues presented during said shareholders meeting.

1 18. The method of claim 17 further including deleting an earlier received  
2 voting form of a remote shareholder who submits a subsequent voting form.

1 19. The method of claim 16 further including transmitting participant  
2 information to said remote shareholders, said participant information comprising encrypted  
3 shareholder information and unencrypted shareholder information, wherein said remote  
4 shareholders then transmit said participant information to their associated satellite server  
5 sites, in response to receiving said participant information said satellite server sites  
6 decrypting said encrypted shareholder information to produce an output and comparing said  
7 output against said unencrypted shareholder information to verify said remote shareholders  
8 for participation in said shareholders meeting.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein said encrypted shareholder  
2 information includes a descrambling key, said first-audio visual information being in  
3 encrypted form, the method further including transmitting said descrambling key from said  
4 satellite server sites to said remote shareholders who use it to decrypt said first-audio visual  
5 information.

1 21. A server system for conducting a shareholders meeting with remote  
2 shareholders comprising:  
3 a computer component having a memory store,  
4 said memory store having first program code configured to operate said  
5 computing unit to notify a plurality of shareholders of a shareholders meeting,  
6 said memory store further having second program code configured to operate  
7 said computing unit to receive notification from at least some of said shareholders indicating  
8 that they will attend said shareholders meeting as remote shareholders, each remotely  
9 attending shareholder having an associated second server which provides shareholders  
10 meeting services,  
11 said memory store further having third program code configured to transmit  
12 meeting proceedings to said second servers for subsequent transmission to said remotely  
13 attending shareholders,

14 said memory store further having fourth program code configured to produce a  
15 final tabulation of votes indicating the voting preferences of all of said shareholders on issues  
16 brought up during said shareholders meeting, including code configured to operate said  
17 computing unit to receive a tabulated votes result from each of said second servers,  
18 said second servers including fifth program code configured to:  
19 receive a voting form from each of its associated remotely attending  
20 shareholders;  
21 tabulate said voting form to produce said tabulated votes result; and  
22 transmit said tabulated votes result to said first server,  
23 wherein said final tabulation of votes includes tabulated votes results from all  
24 of said second servers.

1 22. The system of claim 21 wherein each of said second servers includes  
2 sixth program code configured to operate said computing unit to delete an earlier voting form  
3 of a remote shareholder who has submitted a subsequent voting form.

1 23. The system of claim 21 wherein said memory includes sixth program  
2 code configured to operate said computing unit to receive questions from said second servers  
3 which have been submitted by said remotely attending shareholders and to answer some of  
4 said questions for a period of time, said sixth program code further configured to operate said  
5 computing unit to delete those of said questions which have not been answered when said  
6 period of time has elapsed.

1 24. The system of claim 21 wherein said memory further includes sixth  
2 program code configured to transmit participant information to each of said remotely  
3 attending shareholders, said participant information including an encrypted portion and an  
4 unencrypted portion, wherein said participant information is transmitted by said remotely  
5 participating shareholders to said second servers, said second servers including seventh  
6 program code configured to decrypt said encrypted portion thus producing a decrypted output  
7 and to compare said decrypted output with said unencrypted portion thus verifying said  
8 remotely attending shareholders for participation in said shareholders meeting.

1 25. The system of claim 24 wherein said encrypted portion includes a  
2 descrambling key, said meeting proceedings being in encrypted form, wherein said

descrambling key is transmitted from said second servers to said remotely attending shareholders who use it to decrypt said meeting proceedings.

26. A first server system for conducting a shareholders meeting with remote shareholders comprising:

means for notifying a plurality of shareholders of a shareholders meeting;  
means for receiving notification from at least some of said shareholders indicating that they will attend said shareholders meeting as remotely attending shareholders, each remotely attending shareholder having an associated second server system, said second server systems providing shareholders meeting services to said remotely attending shareholders;

means for transmitting meeting proceedings to said second server systems for subsequent transmission to said remotely attending shareholders; and

means producing a final tabulation of votes indicating the voting preferences of all of said shareholders on issues brought up during said shareholders meeting,

said means for producing including for each of said second server systems:

means for receiving a voting form from each of its associated remotely attending shareholders;

means for tabulating said voting form to produce a tabulated votes result; and

means for transmitting said tabulated votes result to said first server system,

said final tabulation of votes including tabulated votes results from all of said second server systems.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein at each of said second server systems, if one of its associated remotely attending shareholders had cast an earlier voting form, then ignoring said earlier voting form in favor of a most recent voting form.

28. The system of claim 26 further including means for answering questions, said means configured to:

receive for a period of time a plurality of requests to ask a question, including requests from said second server systems which have been submitted by said remotely attending shareholders;

select one of said requests to ask a question during said period of time;

provide an answer to said question; and  
ignore those of said requests to ask a question which have not been selected.

29. The system of claim 26 further including means for transmitting participant information to each of said remotely attending shareholders, said participant information including an encrypted portion and an unencrypted portion, wherein said participant information is transmitted by said remotely participating shareholders to said second servers, said second servers including means for decrypting said encrypted portion to produce a decrypted output and means for comparing said decrypted output with said unencrypted portion to verify said remotely attending shareholders for participation in said shareholders meeting.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein said encrypted portion includes a descrambling key, said meeting proceedings being in encrypted form, wherein said descrambling key is transmitted from said second servers to said remotely participating shareholders who use it to decrypt said meeting proceedings.

31. The system of claim 26 wherein said means for notifying includes means for transmitting to a third server an information signal indicative of said shareholders meeting, and in response to said information signal producing at said third server a shareholders meeting notification and transmitting it to said shareholders.

32. The system of claim 26 further including means for providing for discussion only among said shareholders, including means for receiving at one of said second servers audio-visual information from one of its associated remotely attending shareholders and means for transmitting said audio-visual information only to all of said shareholders.